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Nedzi Quits C.I.A. Panel; House Inquiry Is Delayed

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WASHINGTON, June 12— Representative Lucien N. Nedzi resigned today as chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, protesting that fellow Democrats on the panel had stripped him of all but "a gavel and a title."

The abrupt withdrawal of the Michigan Democrat led to yet another delay in the House's stalled inquiry into charges of illegal and improper intelligence activities in the United States and abroad.

Public examination of William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, was postponed when Republicans boycotted a subcommittee meeting on the ground that Mr. Nedzi's resignation had removed any need for the subcommittee.

The subcommittee was created Monday under an agreement between Democratic House leaders and Democrats on the committee who were demanding that Mr. Nedzi be ousted and a new chairman named.

The insurgent members contended that Mr. Nedzi's ability to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency had been compromised by the disclosure that the agency briefed him secretly

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The New York Times/George James
Lucien N. Nedzi with copy of his statement.

The full House could refuse to approve Mr. Nedzi's resignation, although that was considered unlikely in light of his attitude.

"They can tell me to go back," Mr. Nedzi said, "but I don't know if they can get the sergeant-at-arms to force me in the chair."

The senior Republican on the committee, Representative Robert McClory of Illinois, said that he skipped the subcommittee meeting this morning after he had been advised of Mr. Nedzi's resignation and concluded "there won't be any need for the subcommittee."

Another Republican member, Representative David C. Treen of Louisiana, was outside the committee hearing room, but refused to enter. He said that there was some doubt that the subcommittee had any authority after Mr. Nedzi's resignation and whether it had been properly constituted.

The makeup of the subcommittee was set by the Democratic members last night at a caucus that apparently was marked by the frictions caused by what Mr. Nedzi call "the chemistry" of the majority.

Mr. Nedzi, who had chosen Mr. Stanton to chair the subcommittee, proposed that its membership be limited to two other Democrats, Morgan F. Murphy of Illinois and Don Edwards of California, and Mr.

Treen as the sole Republican.

But when Mr. Nedzi suggested that he be an ex-officio member of the subcommittee, his colleagues pointed out that he would then also have to name Mr. McClory an ex-officio member.

That meant that Mr. Nedzi would have to name another Democrat to preserve the party ratio that, in all House panels, mirrors the 2 to 1 Democratic majority.

Mr. Nedzi chose Representative Ronald V. Dellums of California, one of the panel's most outspoken critics of the C.I.A. But Mr. Giaimo and others said that they believed another C.I.A. critic with more seniority, Representative Michael J. Harrington of Massachusetts, was being deliberately kept off the subcommittee by Mr. Nedzi.

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more than a year ago on plans to assassinate foreign political leaders, and that Mr. Nedzi had taken no action.

Under the intended compromise, a small subcommittee headed by Representative James V. Stanton, Democrat of Ohio, was to investigate the C.I.A., and Mr. Nedzi was to retain control of the inquiry into other intelligence agencies.

But the friction flared anew when committee Democrats decided at a caucus last night that the new panel should include all seven Democrats and three Republicans on the full committee and thus be a "subcommittee of the whole."

Mr. Nedzi said that the caucus action was "intolerable and unfair." It would have placed him in the embarrassing position of a junior participant in the inquiry that, technically, he headed.

"I was unable to operate. I was left with a gavel and a title," Mr. Nedzi told reporters.

Request Put Off

He said that the letter of resignation — from both the chairmanship and the committee — that he had handed to House Speaker Carl Albert was "irrevocable." However, he agreed to the Speaker's request that he wait until Monday to ask the House to approve his resignation.

Representative Robert N. Giaimo, Democrat of Connecticut, said that the committee's majority wanted Mr. Stanton to move up as chairman of the full committee.

"We want to get somebody that we can all support and just get this investigation started," Mr. Giaimo said. "It is shameful the way this has lagged."

There was some speculation late today that Mr. Albert might name some senior Democrat who is not currently assigned to the intelligence investigation to replace Mr. Nedzi. Mr. Nedzi said that that would be preferable to elevating Mr. Stanton.